

## **SUBJECT: Hurricane Katrina Counseling Services for Troops and Families**

- DOD has contracted with a national network of licensed counselors to deploy to military installations/locations supporting troops and families impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The counselors are available to assist active duty, National Guard and Reserve Service members and their families. Counselors will assist in dealing with issues such as:
  - Grief
  - Loss of home and possession
  - Financial loss
  - Employment loss
  - Children's reactions
  - Creating a support network
  - New life planning
  - Situational problem solving
  - Children changing schools
- In addition to the deployed counselors, troops and families can also call toll-free to **1-888-755-9355** to [obtain counseling from a licensed counselor within their immediate geographic area in CONUS.](#)
- The counselors also can provide a range of educational services to include information on the emotional impact of natural disasters on the family. Support groups are organized as appropriate to address reunion and redeployment issues.
- Briefings are provided to family readiness groups, rear detachment commanders and other community staff.
- The counseling is private and short term, up to six sessions.

### **Credentials of Counselors:**

- Troop and Family Counselors are licensed by a state to provide independent clinical practice in their field and have earned at least a master's degree in a mental health related field, such as:
  - social work
  - psychology
  - marriage and family therapy
  - psychiatry
  - counseling
- Individual counselors are placed near or on military communities for 3-6 week rotations.

### **Types of Counseling:**

- The Troop and Family Counseling Service provides problem-solving / situational counseling to assist troops, families and support personnel to cope with the impact of Hurricane Katrina.

- Several models for delivering the Troop and Family Counseling Service have been implemented across the Military Services (see attached models). The **On Demand Service for Critical Incidents (Model #1)** is the model most used to support Hurricane Katrina victims.
- The clinical providers address:
  - Relationships
  - crisis intervention
  - stress management
  - Depression and grief after loss
  - occupational and family issues
- Counseling lasts up to six sessions per issue and can be provided to:
  - Individuals
    - Couples
    - Families
    - Groups

## On Demand Services for Critical Incidents

### Summary

- Critical incidents, including traumatic injuries and experiences, or loss can have a debilitating and lasting effect on a unit or workgroup.
- A confidential, structured group led by a specially trained Counselor assists a unit to regain focus and balance
- For individuals and the unit.

### Contact

- Requested by Command or team leader.

### Activities

- Initial consultation with command representative to ascertain facts and background, and to plan meeting requirements.
- Counselor conducts structured group and/or individual sessions
- Command is debriefed

### Who is Served

- Military Personnel
- Family Members
- Support Staff

### **Other Examples of Counseling Services Provided:**

- The Department contracted with a national network of licensed clinical counselors in early 2005 to provide short term situational/problem solving counseling for troops and their families.
- Counselors can be accessed through the installation family assistance centers. To date, over 20,000 troops and family members have had interactions with the counselors.
- Counselors have been rotating through the main demobilization sites of Fort Dix, Fort McCoy and Camp Shelby. At these demobilization sites, troops are provided with information on what to expect emotionally during family reunions and a toll free number to call to request counseling once at home.

1. Counseling lasts up to six sessions per issue. Areas of support provided by the counselors include help with:

- [Navigating the complex issues of deployment, redeployment and the military lifestyle in general.](#)
- Family Issues
- Marriage and relationship issues
- Anger management
- Parent and child communications
- Single parent challenges
- Support for spouses responsible for supporting the spouses of other deployed Service members
- Family Readiness Group Leaders
- Community volunteers
- DoDEA Schools

2. Counselors were first successfully deployed to Germany in May 2004 to support the families of the 1<sup>st</sup> AD when the division was extended 120 days in support of OIF/OEF. This program continues to provide support to soldiers, families and support personnel who are coping with the stress of reunion and reintegration.

3. Service members and family members are seen in a variety of settings, both formal and informal to include DoDDs Schools, Family Readiness Groups, Family Centers, Chaplain Offices, Units and Child and Youth Programs.

4. As re-integration progresses, there is a growing emphasis on supporting families dealing with issues of stress, marital difficulties and issues with children and adolescents. Other primary areas of need are: communication skills (parent and child, marital), trust issues, financial concerns, isolation, domestic violence, discipline of children, infidelity, substance abuse, fear, and grief.

5. In addition to the deployed counselors, troops and families can also call toll-free to 1-888-755-9355 to [obtain counseling from a licensed counselor within their immediate geographic area in CONUS.](#)

**NOTE:** Although mental health therapy is available through TRICARE, many troops and families will not utilize TRICARE because they do not want the stigma associated with mental health counseling. The new Troop and Family Counseling is preferred because of the privacy it offers. It is anticipated that much more counseling will be needed as an answer to many of the residual problems of the war. Marriage counseling is already in high demand and divorce rates, particularly in the Army office corps have skyrocketed.

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# **COUNSELING MODELS**

## **1. On Demand Services for Critical Incidents**

### **Summary**

- Critical incidents, including traumatic injuries and experiences, or loss can have a debilitating and lasting effect on a unit or workgroup.
- A confidential, structured group led by a specially trained Counselor assists a unit to regain focus and balance
- For individuals and the unit.

### **Contact**

- Requested by Command or team leader.

### **Activities**

- Initial consultation with command representative to ascertain facts and background, and to plan meeting requirements.
- Counselor conducts structured group and/or individual sessions
- Command is debriefed

### **Who is Served**

- Military Personnel
- Family Members
- Support Staff

## 2. Mobilization and Demobilization Centers

### Contact

- Family Center POC
- POC determines assignments of Counselors
- Management Counselor serves as liaison with POC, provides oversight and support to Counselors

### Activities

- **Phase 1: Ongoing Support**
  - Informal support, education, and resource awareness dealing with normal stressors of everyday life including deployment for service personnel and family members
  - Pre-deployment briefings
  - Educational groups
  - Support Groups
  - Attend community meetings and briefings to build awareness
- **Phase 2: Major events**
  - Family Deployment Activities— Counselors provide support during this multi-day social and ceremonial event
  - Reunions and Freedom Flights
- **Phase 3: Post-deployment support**
  - Reintegration process
  - Provide Support at the SRC
  - Family Readiness Groups/Family Support

### Who is Served

- Activated National Guard and Reserves
- Active Duty
- Support staff
- Family members when present

### 3. Reunion & Reintegration Model

#### Contact

- POC usually chaplain or unit commander
- Management Counselor coordinates presentation with POC
- Needs/experience of particular unit discussed

#### Activities

- **Phase 1: Family Member Briefing**
  - One-day event
  - Counselor provided for group and individual interaction
- **Phase 2: Troops Return** One- or two-day event re: issues of returning service members
  - First day includes troops, commanders, chaplains, and Counselors
  - Second day is family event- Includes family members, troops, commanders, chaplains and Counselors for picnic or other activities
- **Phase 3: Ninety day follow up** One or two day event
  - Activity scheduled by Commander
  - Counselors scheduled for support presentation as needed

#### Who Is Served

- Military Personnel
- Family Members
- Support Staff
- Family Readiness Groups/Family Support

## 4. State Wide Drill Weekends

### **Contact**

- Request for Counselors by State Program Coordinators, Unit POC, Family Center POC, Chaplain, Installation Commander and service-level POCs.
- POC determines all drill locations
- Management Counselors coordinates assignments of Counselors for locations requested

### **Activities**

- All participating Counselors brought to central location for pre-briefing
- Following completion of briefing Counselors dispersed to all drill locations
- Unit commanders determine presentation and weekend activities
- Counselors introduced and available throughout the drill weekend

### **Who is Served**

- National Guard
- Reserves



## 5. On Site Counselor – Permanent Model

### Contact

- Request for Counselors by Family Center POC, Chaplain, Installation Commander and service-level POCs.
- Needs of installation discussed and number of Counselors determined
- Management Counselor is liaison with POC and provides oversight and support to Counselors
- Permanent Model is rarely used and only at installations with extremely large populations

### Activities

- **Phase 1 Ongoing Support**
  - Informal support, education, and resource awareness for dealing with normal stressors of everyday life, including deployment, for service personnel and family members
  - Educational groups
  - Career-safe individual and family consultation helping troops and family members with emotional health issues resulting from deployment, reunions, reintegration, etc.
  - Child and Youth Services
  - Attend Community meetings and briefings, including Family Readiness Groups/Family Support groups
  - Reunion, Reintegration, Reconstitution and Redeployment
- **Phase 2 Major Events**
  - Reunion and deployment Ceremonies
  - Community Activities and Events
  - Specific Unit requests based on special circumstances

### Who is Served

- “Mega” installations
- Military Personnel
- Family Members
- Support Staff

## 6. OCONUS Installation Model

### Contact

- Request for Counselors by Regional Family Center Representative, Family Center POC, Chaplain, Installation Commander
- Needs of Installation discussed and number of Counselors determined
- Travel and accommodations coordinated by DoD Contractor
- Management Counselor or Team Lead serves as liaison with POC and provides oversight and support to Counselors
- Counselors are assigned for 30 day rotations

### Activities

- **Phase 1 Ongoing Support**
  - Informal support, education, and resource awareness for dealing with normal stressors of everyday life, including deployment, for service personnel and family members
  - Educational groups
  - Career-safe individual and family consultation helping troops and family members with emotional health issues resulting from deployment, reunions, reintegration, etc.
  - Child and Youth Services
  - Attend Community meetings and briefings, including Family Readiness Groups/Family Support groups
  - Reunion, Reintegration, Reconstitution and Redeployment
- **Phase 2 Major Events**
  - Reunion and deployment Ceremonies
  - Community Activities and Events
  - Specific Unit requests based on special circumstances

### Who is Served

- Military Personnel
- Family Members
- Support Staff

## 7. OCONUS Mobile Team Model (NATO)

### Contact

- Request for Counselors by Regional Family Center Representative, ACSO, Chaplain, Installation Commander
- Needs of multiple Installations discussed and number of Life Counselor Mobile Teams determined at the various sites where these teams will travel
- Travel and accommodations coordinated by DOD Contractor
- Management Counselor or Team Lead serves as liaison with POC and provides oversight and support to Counselors
- Counselors are assigned for 45-60 day rotations

### Activities

- **Phase 1: Ongoing Support**
  - Informal personal support, education and resource awareness
  - Educational groups and presentations
  - Career safe individual and family consultation
  - Child and Youth Services
  - DoDD's and International Schools
  - Attend community meetings and briefings
  - Reunion, Reintegration, Reconstitution and Redeployment
- **Phase 2: Special Services**
  - Reunion and Deployment Ceremonies
  - Community activities and events
  - Specific Unit requests
- These teams will provide support to smaller installations that are geographically separated
- Each team will support several units and rotate through several installations during their tour of duty

### Who is Served

- Military Personnel
- Family Members
- Support Staff

## 8. DoDEA Summer School Model

### Contact

- Request for Counselors by DoDEA Regional/District Representative, Family Center POC, Unit Commander
- DoDEA and Family Center POC coordinate assignments of Counselors
- Management Counselor serves as liaison with POC's and provides oversight to the Counselor

### Activities

- **Phase 1: Support at School**
  - Individual student support
  - Educational presentations on requested topics
  - Supportive/educational groups
  - Guidance and support to staff
  - Individual guidance and support services for parents
- **Phase 2: Support in the Community**
  - Informal personal support and resource awareness
  - Child and Youth Centers
  - Educational workshops
  - Provide support during local activities and events

### Who is Served

- Military Parents and Children
- School Personnel
- Installation Community

## 9. Purple Youth Camp Model

### **Contacts**

- Request for Counselors by Family Service Center, Camp Director or National Guard Coordinator
- Needs of Camp discussed and usually one Counselor Assigned
- Management Counselor is liaison with POC and provides oversight and support to Life Counselor

### **Activities**

- Individual interactions
- Education groups
- Support to senior staff and counselors
- Crisis Intervention

### **Who is served**

- Children with deployed parents
- Staff